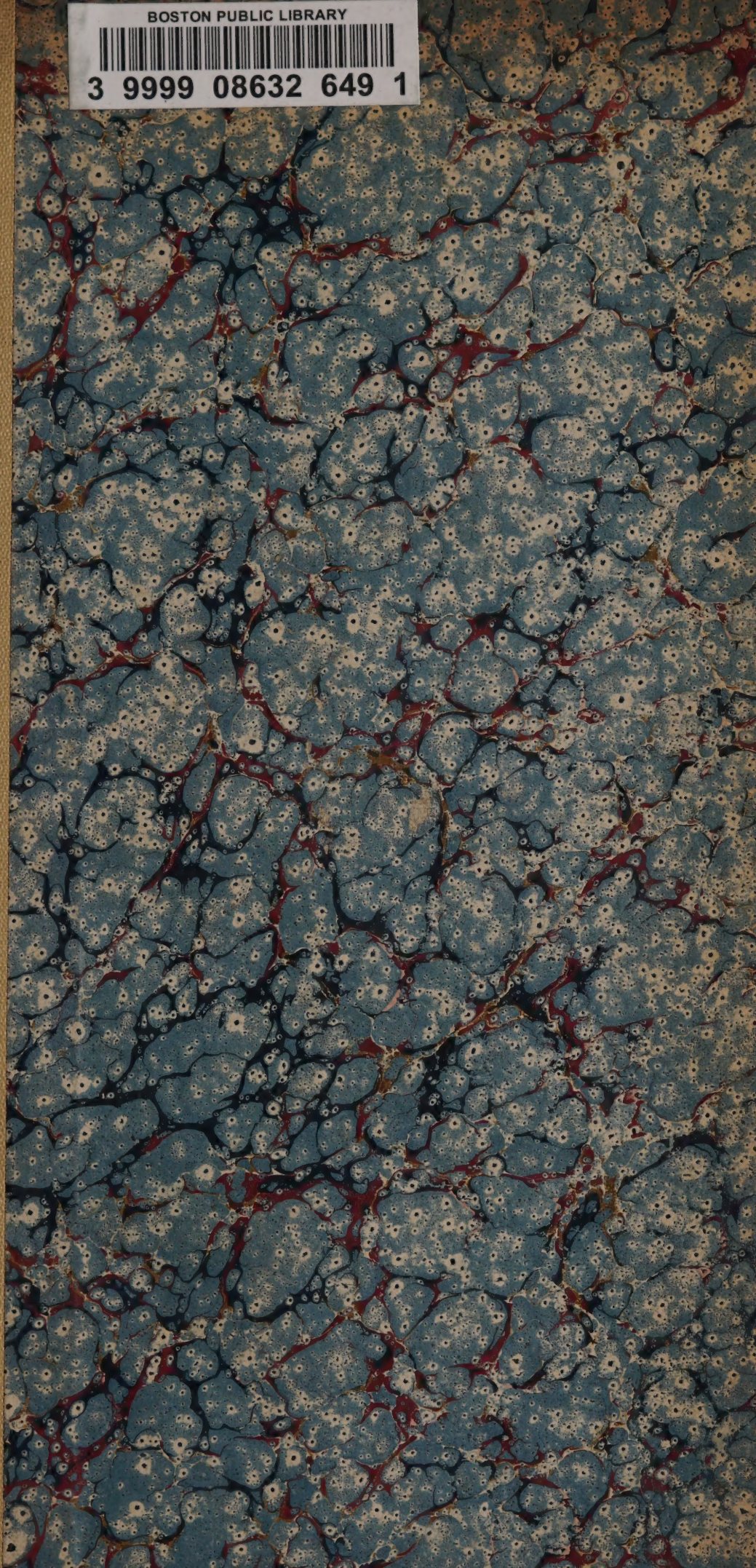


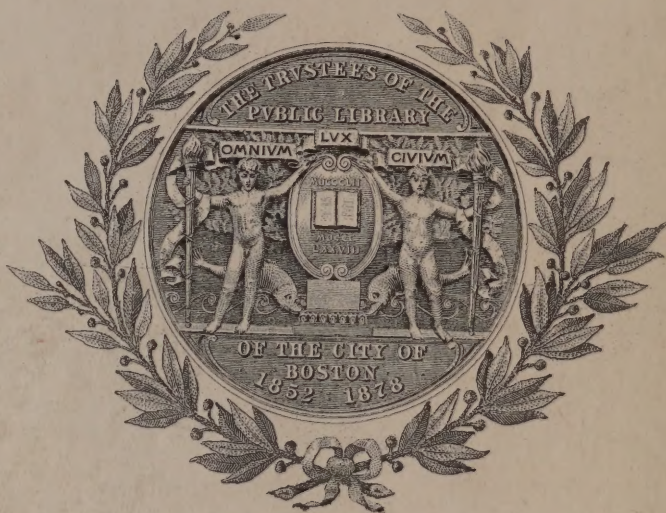
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CONSTITUTION

OF THE

WEST PARISH ASSOCIATION,

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TOGETHER WITH

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE

Sunday Schools,

AND

LIBRARY.

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Constitution

OF THE

WEST PARISH ASSOCIATION.

THE objects proposed by the Association are the promotion of a good understanding and fellow feeling among its members, the advancement of the interests of the religious society with which it is connected, a co-operation in the extensive diffusion of the blessings of Christianity, and the acquisition and general dissemination of the knowledge of facts interesting to a religious community.

For the attainment of these objects, it will promote the formation of a library of practical theology, for the use of the parish; direct its attention to the state of the Sunday Schools and of the Parish Poor; and inquire into the spiritual wants of the Christian world, and the best means of supplying them.

This Association adopts the following Constitution for the conduct of its affairs.

ARTICLE I.

It takes the name of the West Parish Association; and shall consist of all the members of the parish who may subscribe a sum not less than one dollar a year, or who may pay twenty-five dollars and thus constitute themselves members for life of the Association.

ARTICLE II.

There shall be a meeting of the Association held on the first Monday of every month ; at 6 P. M. between the months of October and March, and at 7 P. M. between the months of April and September, inclusive.

ARTICLE III.

The Clergyman of the parish shall be ex officio President of the Association.

ARTICLE IV.

A Secretary, Treasurer, and eight Trustees shall be annually chosen by ballot ; who with the President shall constitute a board of Directors and shall have the controul of whatever funds may be raised, where they are not specially appropriated by the donors. These officers shall be forthwith elected, and afterwards at the meeting in January of each year, and shall continue in office until successors are chosen. Provided, however, that two of the trustees shall annually become incapable of reelection at the ensuing election ; commencing in alphabetical order, and after the resignation of those first chosen, proceeding in chronological order and commencing with the oldest in office.

ARTICLE V.

The Directors shall have power to make such rules and regulations for the proper management of the pecuniary concerns of the Association, from time to time, as they may think proper.

ARTICLE VI.

Once in each quarter, and oftener if deemed ex-

pedient, committees shall be appointed to attend to the objects suggested in the preamble of this constitution.

ARTICLE VII.

The Directors shall maintain correspondence with other similar Associations, and shall make a quarterly report of their proceedings.

ARTICLE VIII.

Amendments may be made in this Constitution on the motion of any member of the Association; previous notice being given of the proposed amendment, at the monthly meeting immediately preceding the one at which it is acted upon: Provided, that either two thirds of the members present, or a majority of the whole number of members composing the Association, shall vote in favour of its adoption,

Report

ON

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The Committee, appointed to inquire into the state of the Sunday Schools of the West Boston Society, have attended to that duty, and ask leave to present the following **REPORT**:

THE School for boys was established in July, 1822, and commenced under the care of six instructors; with about twenty pupils, the number of which however, rapidly increased, so that in December following there were more than fifty who regularly attended. The whole number of boys, whose names have been at different periods on the books, exceeds an hundred; but there have never been more than fifty or sixty, considered as actually belonging to the school at any one time; and the number of these has varied greatly at different periods, and is now reduced to about twenty. The following is the system of instruction and discipline, at present in operation, which has been the result of inquiry into the modes of managing other similar institutions, with such alterations and additions as experience and observation have suggested as necessary or useful.

The hours of instruction are from 8 to 10 o'clock, A. M. from April to October, inclusive; and from 9 to 10 o'clock, A. M. during the remainder of the year.

The boys are divided into classes, each containing six; and every class including an equal number of the older and younger, and the good and indifferent pupils, in order to distribute equally among the teachers the labours, pleasures and advantages of instructing.

There is one General Superintendant, and to each class are attached two Instructors, whose duty it is to attend alternately in monthly rotation, with the understanding that in case of the necessary absence of him whose turn it is to attend, he shall give reasonable notice to his associate to take his place. Any instructor, however, who prefers taking a class without an assistant, upon condition of attending regularly throughout the year, is at liberty to do so; and when absent, calls upon one of the supernumeraries to perform his duty.

The teachers of each class are provided with a class book in which to note the absence, tardiness, merits and demerits of their respective pupils, all of which are reported to the superintendant just before the school is dismissed.

It is the duty of the Superintendant to record these reports and all the proceedings of the instructors, to superintend the instruction of the several classes, and generally to attend all that concerns the school.

The younger children are taught in the elementary catechisms; and the elder, in such books of religious character as are suited to their capacities:—the books used, in addition to the bible, being Mrs. Barbauld's Early Lessons, a catechism peculiarly adapted to in-

fant minds ; Lincoln's Scripture Questions ; Watts' Preservative from the sins and follies of Youth, with some alterations ; Cumming's Scripture Questions ; and Paley's Natural Theology.

Bibles are furnished at the school for all the pupils, and those whose parents cannot afford to purchase, have permission to take one home.

Tickets for punctuality are provided and numbered from one to thirteen inclusive, to correspond with the sabbaths in each quarter of the year ; and upon each is inscribed a reference to some important practical passage in the New Testament. / These tickets are thus used :—The first time in which a pupil comes punctually, he receives No. 1 ; the next time in which he is punctual, he repeats the verse or passage referred to on No. 1, gives it up, and receives No. 2, and so on throughout the quarter ; at the end of which all the tickets are given up, and the next quarter commences with No. 1, again. So that at the end of each quarter, the number on the ticket held by each pupil, shews the number of times in which he has been at school in due season ; and he will have learned and repeated a corresponding number of important practical passages of scripture.

The instructors are particularly attentive and careful in all recitations to see that the lessons are not repeated by rote merely, but understandingly. Besides the tasks given to be learned and repeated from memory, which are usually short, one or two chapters in the Bible are appointed on each Sabbath to be publickly read on the ensuing one, for the purpose of requiring explanations from the pupils, be-

fore the whole school, of the words and passages they may be called to read—an exercise found to be of the greatest utility.*

After the recitations, and before dismissing the school, the superintendant, having received the reports of the instructors, calls out the names of those who have been favourably reported with suitable expressions of approbation; and also the names of those who have been reported for negligence or misbehaviour, with appropriate censures :—and the committee, on examining the records, had the satisfaction to find, that while the reports of the first description usually embraced the greatest proportion of those present; instances of public censure have been very rare.

At the expiration of each month there is a general examination of the school, and those who have obtained a credit mark for every Sunday in it, and have been generally punctual, receive a certificate of merit, No. 1, and those, who have obtained credit marks for every Sunday but one, and have been generally punctual, receive a certificate of merit, No. 2.

And at the close of each quarter, those who have been punctual every Sabbath, which is proved by

* In this connection should be mentioned a plan adopted in one of the classes in the school for female children, of requiring of the pupils, when reciting from the catechism, to repeat passages from the scripture; other than those referred to in the lesson: thus a child in reciting from a catechism a lesson concerning lying, was called upon to illustrate it by a passage from scripture, and immediately repeated the story of Annanias and Sapphira. Thus the idea of an especial Providence, and dread of the consequences of the sin, were forcibly and permanently impressed upon her mind. The selection from scripture is left entirely to the child, thus giving to the instructor a correct knowledge of the manner in which the passage is understood and applied.

exhibiting ticket No. 13, and have also obtained 13 credit marks, receive the highest prize, being a book of the value of from 25 to 50 cents; and those who have obtained the next highest numbers of credit marks and tickets, receive corresponding prizes;—there usually being three grades, and the lowest requiring at least nine credit marks and tickets for punctuality, out of the thirteen.

Upon examining the records of the school, the committee find that several pupils have, each, received the first prize at several different times; a circumstance implying an attention to study and punctuality which nothing, but great zeal and interest in their studies and standing in the school, could have produced.

A great majority of the pupils have usually obtained one or more certificates during the respective quarters; and scarcely any one has been found so idle, as not to be worked upon, by the influence of the system, to exert himself.

Seats are provided in the gallery for those children whose parents have not pews, and monitors are designated to superintend their behaviour, and report accordingly on the ensuing Sabbath: so that correct conduct during divine service is required as well as in school hours.

Upon visiting the school, and superintending the recitations and instituting a general examination of the pupils in the Bible,—the committee are satisfied that they have made satisfactory proficiency, and evince a knowledge of the meaning of the passages and instructions contained in the New Testament, unusual in children of similar ages:—and sufficiently

encouraging to those who have hitherto devoted their time and labour to instructing, and to those who may be disposed hereafter to aid in the undertaking.

The committee find that the efforts of the instructors are principally directed to teaching the children to understand what they read and learn ; and thus to excite a deep and durable interest in their studies, by enabling them to perceive and realize the pleasures and advantages which these studies are calculated to afford : and the committee humbly conceive that such is the most desirable object of the institution.

✓ Few parents are aware how totally ignorant are their children of the significations of the common words and expressions used in their daily prayers, and in the hymns and passages of scripture which they are taught to repeat. ✓ They are required to learn them, in the first instance, at a very early age, and before they are capable of understanding an explanation if it is attempted ; and they afterwards go on from year to year repeating and reading the same words and phrases, from habit, without ever themselves stopping to reflect upon their import or meaning, or ever being called upon to do so by others, who take it for granted, that what is so familiar, must be understood.

✓ Many remarkable instances of this nature occurred upon the first establishment of the school : boys the best educated, and of excellent capacities, were unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the words in the Lord's Prayer, or of the most familiar passages in the Sermon on the Mount, although they

could repeat them with the strictest verbal accuracy. Nor did the difficulty seem in any degree owing to their being unaccustomed to give definitions, but obviously resulted from their having always used the language without any meaning whatsoever.

Finding the system to be as above stated, and that a sufficient number of zealous and competent instructors had rendered their services and efforts to render it effectual and useful, the committee were naturally led to investigate the causes which have prevented the school from being more generally resorted to, and have induced so many to forego it's advantages, who have at one time or another enjoyed them.

And the committee are satisfied that one principal reason why it has not been more generally resorted to, has been a misapprehension of it's true character and design. By some it has been supposed to be in the nature of a charity school, for the benefit of children whose parents are unable to give them even a common school education; others have imagined it to be intended only for children whose parents cannot afford to purchase Bibles, or instruct in the meaning of them; while others, and probably far the greatest number, have considered it an establishment for the benefit of children of the poorer classes generally, whose parents are unable or unused to give those explanations, and that religious instruction, which they feel themselves competent to communicate.

The consequence of all which has been, that a majority of those whose influence and example are

justly of great weight in the the society, have omitted to send their children ; and many who have sent, have afterwards withdrawn them, upon finding that their example was not generally followed.

It is undoubtedly true that this school would be of more importance to those children, whose parents or friends are unable or unwilling to furnish them with bibles, or afford them any religious instruction, than to those, who are blessed with protectors whose daily influence, precepts and example are calculated to impress upon their minds the value and beauty of religion and morality ; and it is most earnestly to be desired, that more of those thus destitute, may be collected to enjoy it's benefits. But this school, so far from being hitherto improved by children of that description, has consisted generally of children of parents in easy and comfortable circumstances, and in many instances from the most respectable families among us ; and those who evidently enjoy the advantages of domestic care and instruction in the study of their lessons.

A very great proportion of those who have at various times appeared in the school, and have since left it, have been of parents not connected with the society, and unknown to any of the instructors ; and it is believed, have often, if not chiefly, been drawn away to other schools of different doctrinal persuasions ; the friends and instructors of which are laudably zealous and industrious in visiting the poor, in order to procure the attendance of the children. An example, excepting in as far as they intrude upon others, to say the least, worthy of our imitation, if

not a reproach upon the lukewarmness of our exertions.

Another cause has been the apprehension that tuition at the school was intended to be substituted for parental instruction, and would gradually lead parents to neglect this important branch of domestic duty.)

The committee, although satisfied, from personal information, of the existence of this objection, are totally at a loss to account for a supposition so erroneous. The whole object and tendency of the institution is directly the reverse of that assumed in this objection.

The hours devoted to the school are those least likely to be improved by parents for the purposes of instruction; being those usually occupied in preparations for the proper observance of the day, and in which children are generally left entirely unemployed. The whole system of tuition at the school, is designed, and the committee think, is well adapted, to produce in the minds of the children a desire to understand what they learn; and to lead them to inquire of their parents and friends the meanings of the lessons and portions of scripture given them to recite and read; while a system of gradual progress is adopted, fitted to each child's growing capacity.— And thus, instead of superseding the necessity of parental care and instruction, a stimulus is given to the children to seek for, and benefit by, it, and a mode pointed out to the parents by which to render that instruction the most easy and effectual.

And the consequence is, that the children are

gradually induced to ask as a favour, that attention and instruction which the parents would be otherwise often compelled to impose as a task.

Another difficulty which has materially impeded the progress of the school, is the want of suitable accommodations.

From the months of April to October, both inclusive, the school is kept in the west gallery of the meeting-house, and although in the summer months the house is sufficiently comfortable, yet in the spring and autumn it is frequently damp and cold ; besides which, owing to the dispersion of the children in the different pews, it is very difficult to superintend and address them with effect ; and the advantages derived from public praises and censures are proportionably diminished, as the objects of them are concealed from general view.

During the remainder of the year, the school is held in this room, and by reason of the bad construction and insufficiency of the stove, and other causes, it has seldom afforded a comfortable protection from the inclemency of the weather :—very great inconvenience, to use no stronger term, has generally been experienced by the instructors and pupils from this cause ; and there is no doubt that many children have been deterred from attending the school (and very reasonably too) in consequence of such exposure.

There is also a school upon the same general system established for the female children, which is under the care of several of the ladies of the society, and has been eminently useful and successful—but which for similar reasons does not include that num-

ber of pupils which it probably would embrace but for the difficulties suggested.)

The committee are of opinion that these causes and others incident to them, sufficiently account for the present apparently declining situation of both these schools ; and they cannot forbear expressing the hope, that a proper understanding of their character and design will render them a subject of interest to the association, and excite in its members a wish to extend their beneficial influence.

It is obvious that the emulation, and aspiration after praise and rewards, by which children in well regulated schools, are animated, and which are laudable and praise-worthy motives, will induce far more vigorous exertions and give to studies a far more attractive charm, than any private instructions, unaccompanied by similar allurements, can produce.— And it is assuming nothing, to suppose, that those who habitually devote their time and attention to the service of instructing boys of various ages and capacities, will be better fitted for the task, than those who only occasionally perform it, and with comparatively very limited objects. It is believed therefore that the Sunday schools will, if rightly improved, be eminently useful in inspiring the children with a desire to understand the sacred scriptures, and giving to them a practical and familiar knowledge of these doctrines and precepts : that they will conduce to the religious improvement of the instructors, as they will be necessarily induced to investigate the meanings of the lessons which they undertake to teach ; and that they will be of service to the parents and friends by

leading and assisting them in their domestic instructions ; and from these views and considerations the committee beg leave respectfully to commend them to the care and patronage of the association.

In conclusion, the committee ask leave to offer to the consideration of the association, the following resolutions :

1. *Resolved*—That the Sunday Schools instituted in the West Boston Society, are deserving of the protection and support of this Association.
2. *Resolved*—That the committee on Sunday schools be directed to confer with the respective instructors and teachers thereof, concerning the welfare of the same ; with instructions to report at the next meeting such changes, if any, as shall be thought adviseable in the organization and government thereof, and what measures it may be adviseable to pursue in order to extend their usefulness.
3. *Resolved*—That the Directors of this Association be requested to authorize the respective Superintendants of the said Schools to draw upon the Treasurer for such sums of money as shall be necessary for the purchase of books, certificates, tickets, and stationary—not exceeding the amount of thirty dollars annually for each school.
4. *Resolved*—That the committee on Sunday schools be directed to take measures for the better accommodation thereof, with instructions to report at the next meeting.

5. *Resolved*—That this Association will attend the quarterly examinations and distributions of prizes.

CHARLES G. LORING, *for the Committee.*

The above report being read, was unanimously accepted.

Voted—That five hundred copies of the constitution and of the reports of the committees on Sunday Schools and Library, be printed and distributed among the members of the West Parish.

A true copy. *Attest,*

JOHN LOWELL, JR. *Secretary.*

Catalogue of Books,

WHICH IT IS PROPOSED TO OBTAIN FOR THE FORMATION

OF THE LIBRARY OF THE

WEST PARISH ASSOCIATION.

Any of the books in this catalogue, or others of a similar character, which members of the parish may be disposed to present to the Library, will be gratefully received. The names of donors will be inserted in the books thus presented, or in those which may be substituted for them, if exchanged by the Association. Books to be sent to the care of the minister, at Mr. Hammatt's, Howard Street. About two hundred volumes have already been presented.

Members of the parish, who subscribe not less than one dollar a year, will be entitled to the use of the Library. Every additional subscription, it may be remembered, will increase the amount that can be appropriated to the purchase of books.

Adams' Dictionary of Religions.

" History of the Jews. 2 vols.

" " of New England.

Aikin's Letters to a Young Lady.

" (L) Life of Aikin.

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 " on the Nature, Origin and Design of Sacrifices.
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 " on the Epistle to the Romans.
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